

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY STATEMENT

As Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture, I recognize the need for Affirmative Action and pledge my commitment to undertake positive actions to overcome the present effects of past practices or barriers to equal employment opportunity and to achieve the full and fair participation of minorities, women, people with disabilities, older persons, and all the protected groups found to be underutilized in the Department's workforce or affected by policies having an adverse impact. In the spirit of Executive Order 11, signed by Governor Ella Grasso on November 21, 1975, and Executive Order 9, signed by Governor William A. O'Neill on January 3, 1984, I further state that this Department will comply with the anti-discrimination provisions of the State and Federal laws and regulations listed at the end of this section.

It is the policy and practice of the Department of Agriculture to ensure that no persons will be discriminated against or be denied the benefits of any activity, program, or employment process receiving public funds, in whole or in part, in the areas of recruiting, advertising, hiring, upgrading, promoting, transferring, demoting, layoffs, terminations, rehiring, rates of pay benefits, discipline, and service ratings. The Department pledges to affirmatively provide services and programs in a fair and impartial manner.

"Affirmative Action" is positive action, undertaken with conviction and effort, to overcome the present effects of past practices, policies or barriers to equal employment opportunity and to achieve the full and fair participation of women, blacks and hispanics and other protected groups found to be underutilized in the work force or affected by policies or practices having an adverse impact.

"Equal Employment Opportunity" is employment of individuals without consideration of race, color, religious creed, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, national origin, ancestry, intellectual disability, genetic information, learning disability, physical disability (including, but not limited

to, blindness) mental disability (past/present history thereof) or criminal record, unless the provisions of §46a-80(b) or 46a-81(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes are controlling or there is a bona fide occupational qualification excluding persons in one of the above protected groups. Equal Employment Opportunity is the purpose and goal of Affirmative Action under §46a-68-31 through 46a-68-74 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies.

The Department views Affirmative action and equal employment opportunities as ongoing immediate and necessary Department objectives. A list of all federal and state constitutional provisions, laws regulations, guidelines and executive orders that prohibit or outlaw discrimination is attached to this policy statement.

I recognize the hiring difficulties experienced by minorities, people with disabilities and by many older persons and, where appropriate, I have set program goals to overcome the present effects of past discrimination, if any, to achieve the full and fair utilization of such persons in the work force. I further pledge that the agency will affirmatively provide services and programs in a fair and impartial manner.

Affirmative action plays a role in each stage of the employment process. These stages include:

- a) Advertising/Recruiting that ensures there is an available pool of protected class members for vacancies, whenever possible;
- b) The periodic review of employment applications, job qualifications, job specifications, and personnel practices to ensure that there are not artificial barriers set to prevent qualified applicants from employment;
- c) Ensuring that all new employees are given a copy of the Department's Affirmative Action Policy Statement as part of their orientation process;
- d) Training opportunities are made available by voluntary request and participation of the employee;
- e) The Department's Equal Employment Opportunity Manager is available to counsel employees regarding affirmative action issues and to assist them in pursuing the agency's grievance procedure, if applicable;

- f) Service ratings are based solely on job performance, and are reviewed and signed by the individual's immediate supervisor as well as the next level supervisor, the agency personnel director, commissioner, and the employee in order to ensure the absence of bias in the evaluation process;
- g) Layoffs are consistent with the State regulations and applicable collective bargaining contracts;
- h) Terminations are a result of just cause and are absent of discrimination due to protected class membership.

As Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture, I will make each person involved in the implementation of this Plan, aware of his/her responsibilities to integrate this program into the Department's daily activities. I will hold staff accountable for their affirmative action performance.

This policy statement will be given annually to all Department employees and will also be posted throughout the agency. I also expect each supplier, union, consultant and other State agencies with which we do business to comply with all applicable State and Federal Equal Opportunity laws and regulations. The agency will not knowingly do business with any entity debarred from participation in any federal or state program or found to be in violation of any state or federal antidiscrimination law.

I also promise to make every good-faith effort to achieve the goals within the timetables set forth in this *Plan*.

I have assigned the responsibility to achieve the successful implementation of our goals and objectives to Irena Baj-Wright, Human Resources Specialist, Department of Administrative Services, 165 Capitol Avenue, State Office Building 5th Floor East, Hartford, CT 06106, telephone at (860) 713-5391, e-mail at irena.baj-wright@ct.gov and Alicia Nuñez, Equal Employment Opportunity Manager, Department of Administrative Services, 165 Capitol Avenue, State Office Building 5th Floor East, Hartford, CT 06106, telephone at (860) 713-5317, e-mail at alicia.nunez@ct.gov

Steven Reviczky
Steven Reviczky
COMMISSIONER

Rev 6/2012